

In the Claims

Please amend the claims on file as follows:

1. (Original) A desanding vessel for removal of particulates from a fluid stream containing particulates, comprising:

a fluid Inlet adjacent a first end of the vessel and adapted for receiving the fluid stream, the fluid inlet discharging the fluid stream at an inlet velocity into a freeboard portion at a top of the vessel, the fluid stream in the freeboard portion having an elutriation velocity less than the Inlet velocity and such that contained particulates have a fall trajectory;

a fluid outlet from the vessel, the outlet being spaced horizontally from the inlet; and

a flow barrier depending from the top of the vessel and having a lower edge so as to direct the fluid stream below the barrier before discharge from the outlet port for maintaining the freeboard portion above the lower edge and forming a belly storage portion below the lower edge, the flow barrier being positioned between the fluid inlet and fluid outlet and the flow barrier being spaced from the fluid inlet so as to enable the fall trajectory of a substantial amount of the particulates to intersect the belly portion so as accumulate particulates in the belly portion prior to the flow barrier wherein the fluid stream at the fluid outlet is substantially free of particulates.

2. (Original) The desanding vessel of claim 1 further comprising a cleanout port for periodically accessing and removing particles accumulated in the belly portion.

3. (Original) The desanding vessel of claim 1 wherein the flow barrier is spaced from the fluid outlet.

4. (Original) The desanding vessel of claim 1 wherein the flow barrier further comprises a plate having a substantially horizontal lower edge and the fluid outlet is located in the freeboard volume adjacent to the flow barrier opposite the fluid inlet.

5. (Original) The desanding vessel of claim 1 wherein the flow barrier is formed by the fluid outlet, the fluid outlet further comprising a tubular portion extending downwardly through the freeboard portion for forming the flow barrier and terminating at the lower edge.

6. (Original) The desanding vessel of claim 1 wherein the vessel is cylindrical having a substantially horizontal axis, a top wall and a bottom wall.

7. (Original) The desanding vessel of claim 6 wherein the cylindrical vessel has a first end and a second end, and wherein the inlet port is located at the first end and discharges the fluid stream into the freeboard portion along a fluid path which is substantially parallel to the vessel's axis.

8. (Original) The desanding vessel of claim 7 wherein the inlet port is offset above the vessel's axis.

9. (Original) The desanding vessel of claim 7 wherein the inlet port further comprises:

- an inlet flange;
- a nozzle forming the fluid inlet; and
- a nozzle flange for releasably connecting to the inlet flange.

10. (Original) The desanding vessel of claim 7 wherein the inlet port further comprises an eccentric fitting positioned between the vessel and the inlet flange for aligning the nozzle offset above the vessel's axis.

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11. (Previously presented) The desanding vessel of claim 7 wherein a lower edge of the flow barrier depends below the inlet port.

12. (Original) The desanding vessel of claim 7 wherein the inlet port further comprises:

a first connection at the first end of the vessel,

a second connection adapted for releasably and sealingly connecting to the first connection, the second connection further comprising a nozzle extending through the second connection, the nozzle having

a first end adapted for connection to the source of the fluid stream, and

a second end protruding into the vessel for discharging the fluid stream and particulates into the freeboard portion spaced inwardly from the first end.

13. (Original) The desanding vessel of claim 12 wherein lower edge of the flow barrier depends below the inlet port.

14. (Original) The desanding vessel of claim 7 further comprising a cleanout port for periodically accessing and removing particles accumulated in the belly portion further comprising:

a cleanout connection at the second end of the vessel and aligned with the belly portion; and

a cleanout cover for coupling with the cleanout connection and operable between a sealed position and an open position for permitting removal of particulates from the belly portion.

15. (Original) The desanding vessel of claim 14 further comprising means for isolating the vessel from the fluid stream and depressurizing the vessel before opening the cleanout port.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Original) A desanding system for adaptation to an existing wellhead having a fluid stream flowing to downstream equipment and for the removal of particulates from the fluid stream, comprising:

a vessel positioned between the wellhead and the downstream equipment for intercepting the fluid stream;

a structure for supporting the vessel relative to the wellhead and downstream equipment, wherein

the vessel comprises a fluid inlet adjacent a first end of the vessel and adapted for receiving the fluid stream, the fluid inlet discharging the fluid stream at an inlet velocity into a freeboard portion at a top of the vessel, the fluid stream in the freeboard portion having an elutriation velocity less than the inlet velocity and such that contained particulates have a fall trajectory, a fluid outlet from the vessel, the outlet being spaced horizontally from the inlet; and a flow barrier depending from the top of the vessel and having a lower edge so as to direct the fluid stream below the barrier before discharge from the outlet port for maintaining the freeboard portion above the lower edge and forming a belly storage portion below the lower edge, the flow barrier being positioned between the fluid inlet and fluid outlet and the flow barrier being spaced from the fluid inlet so as to enable the fall trajectory of a substantial amount of the particulates to intersect the belly portion so as accumulate particulates in the belly portion prior to the flow barrier wherein the fluid stream at the fluid outlet is substantially free of particulates.

18. (Original) The desanding system of claim 17 wherein the vessel is cylindrical and further comprises

a substantially horizontal axis, a top wall and a bottom wall;

a first end and a second end, and wherein the inlet port is located at the first end and discharges the fluid stream into the freeboard portion along a fluid path which is substantially parallel to the vessel's axis and offset above the vessel's axis.

19. (Original) The desanding system of claim 18 wherein the inlet port further comprises an eccentric fitting positioned between the vessel and the inlet flange for aligning the nozzle offset above the vessel's axis.

20. (Original) The desanding system of claim 19 further comprising a cleanout port for periodically accessing and removing particles accumulated in the belly portion further comprising:

a cleanout connection at the second end of the vessel and aligned with the belly portion; and

a cleanout cover for coupling with the cleanout connection and operable between a sealed position and an open position for permitting removal of particulates from the belly portion.